RECENT LITERATURE.

The British Museum Catalogue of the Picariæ.—The "Order Picariæ," as treated in the 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum' (Vols. XVI–XIX), consists of eight 'suborders,' as follows: (1) Upupæ, (2) Trochili, (3) Coraciæ, (4) Halcyones, (5) Bucerotes, (6) Trogones, (7) Scansores, (8) Coccyges. This arrangement is adopted tentatively, as under the head of 'Order IV, Picariæ' (p. 1) we find the following: "The adoption of an 'order of Picarians' is at best a provisional measure, and if this 'order' be thought to be inadmissible, then the divisions proposed by Mr. Seebohm would have to rank as separate orders, and might be arranged in a sequence more in conformity with what are, at present, considered their natural affinities."

The volumes treating of the Scansores and Coccyges appeared in 1890 and 1891, the Woodpeckers (Vol. XVIII) being by Mr. Hargitt (*cf.* Auk, VIII, Jan., 1891, p. 92), and the remaining families of the Scansores and the Coccyges (Vol. XIX) by Mr. Sclater and Mr. Shelley, respectively (*cf.* Auk, IX, Apr., 1892, p. 184). Volumes XVI and XVII have recently appeared, the former[1] embracing the Upupæ and Trochili, by Mr. Osbert Salvin, and four families of the Coraciæ, by Mr. Ernst Hartert; the latter[2] (Vol. XVII) contains the remaining families of the Coraciæ, the Halcyones, Bucerotes, and Trogones, by Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Grant.

The 'suborder Upupæ,' although comprising only about 15 species, is divisible into two families,—the Hoopoes (Upupidæ), with one genus and 5 species, and the Wood-Hoopoes (Irrisoridæ), with three genera and 10 species.

The 'suborder Trochili' includes 127 genera, as defined by Mr. Salvin, and 482 species, represented in the collection of the British Museum by 8253 specimens, of which 161 are type specimens of valid species. This large number of specimens includes "the two largest collections of Humming Birds that have been made hitherto, viz. those of the late Mr. J. Gould and of Messrs. Godman and Salvin." The group is arbitrarily

---

[1] Catalogue | of the | Picariæ | in the | Collection | of the | British Museum. | — | Upupæ and Trochili, | by | Osbert Salvin. | Coraciæ, | of the Families | Cypselidæ, Caprimulgidæ, Podargidae, and | Steatornithidæ, | by | Ernst Hartert. | London: Printed by order of the Trustees. Sold by | Longmans & Co., 37 Soho Square; | . . . . [= etc., 4 lines] 1892.—8vo. pp. xvi + , 704, pll. xvi.=Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum, Vol. XVI.

[2] Catalogue | of the | Picariæ | in the | Collection | of the | British Museum. | — | Coraciæ (contin.) and Halcyones, | with the Families | Leptosomidæ, Coraciidæ, Meropidæ, | Alcedinidæ, Momotidæ, Todidæ, and Coliidæ, | by | R. Bowdler Sharpe. | Bucerotes and Trogones, | by | W. R. Ogilvie Grant. | London: Printed by order of the Trustees. | Sold by Longmans & Co., 39 Paternoster Row; | . . . . [= etc., 4 lines] 1892.—8vo, pp. xi, 522, pll. xvii. = Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum, Vol. XVII.

divided into three 'sections,' according to the presence or absence, or partial absence, of serrations near the tip of the bill, viz. (1) 'Trochili serrirostres,' (2) 'Trochili intermedii,' and (3) 'Trochili lævirostres.' The difficulty of finding trenchant characters for the subdivision of the Trochili into natural supergeneric groups is well known, but the one here chosen seems the most unfortunate and artificial that could have been selected. Besides being one of degree merely of a character rarely strongly marked, the major divisions based on it separate widely genera which in general characters are often closely related. This results in extensive transpositions of genera from the order in which they have heretofore usually been placed. As already stated, the number of species recognized as valid is 482; as, however, a number of species are mentioned in foot-notes as unknown to the author, and thus not included in the above number, the total of species and subspecies may be estimated in round numbers as not far from 500. This is a considerable increase over the number (426) recognized by Mr. Elliot in 1878, since which time, however, many new species have been described. The method of treatment is of course similar to that of the preceding volumes of the 'Catalogue.' We note one new genus, *Neolesbia* (p. 145, type *Cyanolesbia nehrkorni* Berl.), but the eight apparently new species, as they stand in the body of the work, were really described in 1891, in the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History' (Vol. VII. pp. 375–379), as duly noted in the 'Addenda' to the present volume.

The Trochili occupy pp. 27–433 of Vol. XVI, and are followed by the first four families of the 'Coraciæ,' namely, Cypselidæ. Caprimulgidæ, Steatornithidæ, and Podargidæ, by Mr. Hartert. The Cypselidæ number 78 species, and are represented in the British Museum by 1500 specimens; the Caprimulgidæ number 86 species, represented by 1800 specimens; the Podargidæ number 24 species, represented by 271 specimens; and the Steatornithidæ by 1 species and 14 specimens. Respecting the relationships of some of these groups, Mr. Hartert observes: "The Cypselidæ have been placed, along with the Trochilidæ and Caprimulgidæ, in the order 'Macrochires' or 'Strisores.' This arrangement is based on good grounds, and has much to commend it. Some recent anatomists deny the near relationship of these families. If raised to the rank of orders, Cypseli, Trochili, and Caprimulgi should be placed near together" (p. 435).

Mr. Hartert prefers to retain the name Cypselidæ for the Swifts, in place of Micropodidæ, on the ground that the law of priority should apply to families as well as to genera and species. With this we agree, but we differ from Mr. Hartert in his interpretation of its application to families. When *Cypselus* is shown to be a synonym of *Micropus*, and *Micropus* becomes the name of the group formerly currently known as *Cypselus*, from which the name of the family was derived, we believe the name of the family should be changed to conform to the correct name of the genus from which the name of the family is taken. In cases like the present it might seem better to retain well-known family names, although based on

generic names which have lapsed into synonymy. But suppose it had turned out that *Cypselus* was not merely a synonym of an earlier name for the same genus, but was preoccupied in some other department of zoölogy, or for a genus in some other family of birds. The propriety and even desirability of changing the family name derived from *Cypselus* would then be obvious. In fact, such change would be in accordance with current usage. Hence Canon V of the A. O. U. Code of Nomenclature, which rules that "When a generic name becomes a synonym, a current family or subfamily name based upon such generic name becomes untenable." We believe that a rule in nomenclature, if it is to have any value, must be a strict rule, and hence not open to exceptions, to be determined by the individual preferences of authors.

Mr. Hartert considers, and apparently with good reason, that our North American *Micropus melanoleucus* is not congeneric with the Old World species of *Micropus* (type, *Hirundo apus* L.), and has accordingly instituted (p. 459) for it the new genus *Aëronautes*. He also proposes the new genus *Claudia* (p. 469) for the South American *Cypselus squamata* Cass.

Mr. Hartert sees no reason for recognizing the genus *Antrostomus* Nuttall as distinct from *Caprimulgus* (*cf.* Ibis, April, 1892, p. 285). He therefore places all the species, from both North and South America, for a long time generally referred to *Antrostomus*, in the genus *Caprimulgus*, which, as thus defined, includes about 50 species and subspecies, and has a nearly cosmopolitan distribution.

The *Antrostomus macromystax* of Baird and Ridgway (*cf.* Ridgw., Man. N. Am. Bds., p. 298), is described as a new species, under the name *Caprimulgus salvini* (Ibis, 1892, p. 287), it being not the *Caprimulgus macromystax* Wagler, which Mr. Hartert makes identical with Brewster's *Antrostomus vociferus arizonæ*. Thus *C. macromystax* Wagler becomes *C. vociferus macromystax* (Wagl.) Hartert.

Phalænoptilus nuttalli nitidus Brewst. and *P. n. californicus* Ridgw. are not considered as separable, even as subspecies, from *P. nuttalli*. We are of opinion, however, that this conclusion is open to revision.

It is interesting to note that a specimen (♂ ad.) of *Otophanes macleodi* Brewst. is reported from the Salvin-Godman Collection, collected at Zapotlan, Jalisco, Mexico, by Mr. W. Lloyd, making the second specimen of this peculiar form thus far known to science.

The North American species of *Chordeiles* stand as in the A. O. U. Check-List, except that *C. texensis* is made a subspecies of *C. acutipennis* —the status formerly accorded it by American writers.

In Volume XVII, Mr. Sharpe treats the families Leptosomatidæ, Coraciidæ (Rollers), Meropodidæ (Bee-eaters), Alcedinidæ (Kingfishers), Momotidæ (Mot-mots), Todidæ (Todies), and Coliidæ (Colies), and Mr. Grant the Bucerotes (Hornbills) and Trogones (Trogons). These nine families include 397 species (exclusive of subspecies), represented in the collection of the British Museum by 7904 specimens. The Kingfishers number 183 species (besides 30 subspecies), the Hornbills 68, the Trogons 47, the Bee-eaters 36, the Rollers 25, leaving 37 species only to

the remaining three families. Of the 397 species treated in the volume "only 16 species are wanting to the collection of the Museum, and more than one fourth of them are represented by the types." Of the 23 species and subspecies described as new, or which are newly named, 18 are Kingfishers. Our North American *Ceryle cabanisi* is described as a new subspecies, under the name *Ceryle americana*, subspecies β. *septentrionalis*, trinomials, pure and simple, not being admitted into the 'Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum.' True *cabanisi* is restricted to "Peru." The tropical American *Ceryle superciliosa* is separated into three subspecies, — the true *superciliosa* of South America, *stictoptera* Ridgw. from Mexico and Central America, and *æquatorialis* (subsp. nov.) from Ecuador. Throughout Mr. Sharpe's portions of the work not only have many new forms been described, but many old ones have been reduced to subspecies. Mr. Grant does not appear to recognize subspecies; even where forms are shown to intergrade, as in the *Trogon caligatus* group, they are either kept separate, or lumped as 'races,' distinguished by the letters A, B, etc., as under *Trogon atricollis*, where we have "Race A (*Trogon atricollis*)" and Race B (*Trogon tenellus*)."

These useful volumes, with those previously published, bring this great work through the Raptorial, Passerine, 'Scansorial' and Psittacine series, leaving for future volumes the Pigeons and Grouse, the Tinamous, and the Wading and Swimming Birds, which will probably require many additional volumes to the twenty already published.—J. A. A.

Cory's 'Catalogue of West Indian Birds.' — Mr. Cory's 'Catalogue'[1] is intended to be used in connection with his 'Birds of the West Indies,' the 'Appendix' including a number of species not in that work, as well as many changes in nomenclature. The 'Catalogue' consists essentially of five parts: (1) a tabular list of the genera and species peculiar to the West Indies (pp. 9–20); (2) a bibliography of West Indian ornithology, arranged (*a*) geographically by islands or groups of islands (pp. 21–60), and (*b*) chronologically (pp. 61–79); (3) the 'Catalogue' proper (pp. 81–125); (4) lists of the species and subspecies peculiar to the different islands (pp. 126–134); (5) 'Appendix' (pp. 135–157), consisting of annotations to the 'Catalogue' proper.

The main 'Catalogue' is briefly annotated with reference to the distribution of the species, but instead of giving the names of the islands in full only the group of islands is mentioned, the separate islands where the species occur being denoted by numerals, a key to which is given in the preface and at p. 80. While this saves space and possibly saved trouble to the author, it entails upon the reader the labor of constant reference to

[1] Catalogue | of | West Indian Birds. | Containing a list of all species known to occur in the Bahama Islands, the | Greater Antilles, the Caymans, and the Lesser Antilles, excepting | the Islands of Tobago and Trinidad, | by | Charles B. Cory,— . . . .[=8 lines of titles, etc.] | — | Published by the Author. | Boston, U. S. A. | 1892,— 4to, pp. 163 and map.